DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 176 583 FL 010 707

AUTHOR Wescae, Marjorie B.
TITLE Learning Behaviors of Successful Adult Students on Intensive Language Training.
PUB DATE Jun 77
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Los Angeles Second Language Research Forum (1st, Los Angeles, California, February 11-13, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Learning; Adult Students; Class Activities; French; Intensive Language Courses; Language Instruction; *Language Processing; *Language Proficiency; Language Research; Languages for Special Purposes; *Learning Activities; Learning Characteristics; Learning Processes; *Learning Theories; Listening Comprehension; Postsecondary Education; *Second Language Learning; Skill Development; Speech Communication

ABSTRACT

The study described here sought to identify and define "learning behaviors" characteristic of those adult students who were highly successful in acquiring listening and speaking fluency in French in an intensive language training program. Data were collected from behavioral observation of students in the classroom, in-depth interviews with them, pre-training questionnaires and objective predictive measures. The learning behaviors are described including their frequency of occurrence during selected classroom activities and the relationship of these behaviors to achievement in listening and speaking skills. The statistical analyses are supplemented by group findings from interviews with the eleven highest and seven lowest achievers. Findings are interpreted in terms of an information processing model. The results suggest that the most successful learners are those who use their exposure time in the L2 actively and who seek to extend this outside the classroom. With regard to the appropriateness of an information-processing model for language learning, one conclusion is that satisfactory explanation of the language acquisition process remains beyond the reach of present theory or research. (Author/AMH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Marjorie D. Wesche, Ph.D., Public Service Commission of Canada.

Learning Behaviors of Successful Adult Students on Intensive Language Training

The focus of research on learner factors in second language acquisition in the last two decades has moved from the identification and measurement of student characteristics which predict success in language training to concern with the psychological processes underlying such success. From the earlier research we know that certain measurable student characteristics show a fairly consistent relationship with classroom second language achievement, among them language aptitude, certain attitudes, age, previous second language experience and academic success in other areas. But in terms of the psychological processes involved in the mastery of a second language, our explanations of why these factors predict remain speculative. Much of the research presently underway aims at a better understanding of these language learning processes, infering from observational data on second language learners and careful analysis of their output in the target language.

The study discussed below sought to identify and define "learning behaviors" characteristic of highly successful adult students in an intensive language training program. Data was collected via behavioral observation of students in the classroom, in-depth interviews with them, pre-training questionnaires and objective predictive measures. A classroom situation was chosen to permit comparison among learners who received similar L2 input under essentially equivalent conditions.[1]

This paper describes the "learning" behaviors observed, their frequency of occurrence during selected classroom activities, and their relationship to achievement in listening and speaking skills. The statistical analyses are supplemented by group findings from interviews with the eleven highest and seven lowest achievers. The self-learning behaviors described by the highest achievers are reported. Findings are interpreted in terms of an information processing model.

SAMPLE

The students were English-speaking Canadian civil servants learning French in a 6-hour daily, audio-visual, beginning level training program (See Table 1). Three week cycles of full-time training were alternated with nine week periods at their regular jobs. The classes observed were in the highest two of four initial ability groupings, meaning that student aptitude scores on the Modern Language Aptitude Test Short Form (MLAT) were not lower than the average score for the population on training. As may be seen from Table 1, the high ability group closely resembles a random sample from the total population in age and formal education, has slightly more males, and differs significantly with respect to MLAT scores. Within this group, which from previous evidence could be expected to have the requisite ability to succeed in the training situation, the study aimed to identify characteristics of those students who were particularly successful in acquiring listening and speaking fluency in French during nine weeks (3 cycles) of training.

TABLE 1.

Descriptive Data on High Ability Sample Compared with Representative Sample from Population.

	High Ability Sample N = 37		Representative Sample N = 163	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Age in years	33.8	8.0	34.8	9.6
MLAT short form	64.6	13.2	53.1	16.2
Sex	81% male		73% male	
Formal education	3 years university		3 years university	

(Range for both groups from high school diploma to Ph.D.)

ED176583

FL010707

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Carol Henning
Editor, LK and L. Branch
Focus

PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS

Thirty-seven students in eight classes were periodically video-taped during selected phases of their classroom activities during the second and third training cycles (i.e. weeks 5 to 9 of training). An observation grid was developed for the project specifying 18 observable language classroom behaviors hypothesized to be characteristic of successful language learners.[2] The behaviors could be roughly categorized as follows:

1) Attention to new material being learned (eye contact, sub-vocal rehearsal, etc.
2) maximation of active L_2 practice (frequency and variety)
3) use of the L_2 for meaningful communication (role-playing and self-expression)
4) verification of hypotheses (getting feedback)

The grid items are listed in Appendix 1.

After a pilot study, students in the actual study were video-taped during weeks 5-9, via remote control, one side of the classroom at a time (3-4 students) until representative segments of the three selected types of lesson activity had been recorded for each student. This meant at least 2 full days of taping per classroom during each of the last two cycles, due to the vagaries both of the curriculum and of the equipment. Each student was filmed with 2 or 3 different teachers.

Three judges were trained in the use of the observation grid until a minimum interjudge agreement of 80% on the number of observed occurrences of each behavior was achieved on a pilot series of 10-minute segments for 10 students. In most cases there was 100% agreement. A recheck one week later produced similar results. With such high inter-judge agreement, it was decided that each one should judge a sub-set of the count items instead of using pooled ratings. Pooled ratings were used for the two scale items. The pooled-rater reliability coefficients for these two items, calculated on the pilot data according to Ebel's formula[3], were .79 for variable (1) and .84 for (2).

The lesson activities chosen for VTR observation were those which were common to all classes and which encouraged student participation and initiative.[4] Three 12-minute sequences were analyzed for each student, including the following activities: memorizing a new dialogue in French from a tape recording (listening and repeating), using the newly learned elements in a variety of structure and vocabulary drills; and performing original dialogues based on recently learned material. Since the films never included more than four students, it was possible to rate them all at the same time. Care was taken to vary the order with which particular class groups were shown, and the type of lesson activity.

To complement the VTR data, in-depth, structured interviews were carried out with a number of the students and tabulated for 11 of the most and 7 of the least successful students in the sample during weeks 8-9 of training. Answers were tape-recorded for later analysis and comparison. Questions explored each student's background, attitudes toward the training situation and conscious learning techniques. It was of particular interest to determine whether the learning approaches reported more frequently by the better students were the same as those identified through the VTR ratings as related to success. Such guided introspection on the learning process was felt to be particularly valid in this intensive training situation, in which very precise questions could be geared to contexts familiar to all the students.

Success was defined in terms of listening comprehension and speaking skills, as measured during the last week of training both with a test standardized for this population, and with pooled ratings of each student's "real-life L_2 communicative ability" by native speaker teachers. These two measures correlated with each other at .68. (See Appendix 2 for further information on the criterion measures).

DATA ANALYSIS

The behavioral observation data was analysed using Pearson-R correlational and stepwise regression. The criterion for the regression analyses was the listening and speaking test score from the 9th week of training. Parallel analyses were made, one using the pre-test placement level as a covariate to take into account entry differences in French skills, and the other with no covariate.

The interview results were summarized for the highly successful and least successful students, and the two groups compared.

STATISTICAL FINDINGS

As shown on Table 2, many of the behaviors occurred only infrequently, and the amount of activity of any given kind varied considerably from student to student. An average total of thirteen occurrences of the behaviors per student was observed during the 36-minute sequences, representing an average of approximately six different behaviors.

TABLE 2.

LEARNING BEHAVIOURS, DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS
Number of Occurrences

N = 37

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
(non-scale items only)		
(3) Voluntarily repeats	1.11	2.37
(4) Works on corrections	1.86	1.38
(5) Discusses lesson	.86	.92
(6) Comments in French	1.59	1.82
(7) Stresses accuracy	1.78	1.29
(8) Stresses communication	.38	.68
(9) Role-plays	1.81	1.35
(10) Asks questions	.49	1.24
(11) Total learning behaviours	12.81	6.94
(12) Different learning behaviours	5.84	1.76

*See Appendix 1 for full descriptions.

TABLE 3

LEARNING BEHAVIOURS, CORRELATION MATRIX

(N=37)

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	
Placement level	-.011	.039	.283	.085	.438**	.038	.185	-.382*	.201	.127	.221	.174	.398*
(1) Not attentive (scale)		.657**	-.250	-.385*	-.082	-.062	-.437**	-.115	-.170	-.040	-.361*	-.382*	-.153
(2) Gives up easily (scale)			-.287	-.342*	-.288	-.005	-.368*	-.107	-.209	-.224	-.466**	.027	-.069
(3) Voluntarily repeats				.286	.429**	.237	.171	.129	.389*	.598**	.683**	.305	.327*
(4) Works on corrections					.073	.044	.513**	.145	.329*	.267	.497**	.404*	.253
(5) Discusses lesson						.016	.209	-.138	.382*	.304	.536**	.331*	.458**
(6) Comments in French							-.180	.015	.058	.275	.333*	-.012	.128
(7) Stresses accuracy								-.283	.040	.171	.373*	.214	.136
(8) Stresses communication									.442**	.171	.168	.331*	.128
(9) Role-plays										.355*	.559**	.467**	.601**
(10) Asks questions											.728**	.369*	.284
(11) Total learning behaviors												.559**	.420**
(12) Different learning behaviors													.472**

Post-test

**, * The double asterisk indicates statistical significance at $p < .01$, and a single asterisk at $p < .05$.

relations among observed behaviors, shown in Table 3, indicate that many of them tended to occur together. Thus it may be complexes of them rather than specific ones which characterize different kinds of learners. The behavioral variables which correlate significantly with the criterion are listed below in decreasing order of the correlation magnitude.

(9) "Role-plays" when using French. Takes part of character being played (including self), with speech characterized by prosodic expressions of feeling appropriate to the context and by accompanying gestures and facial expressions.

(12) Number of different learning behaviours observed.

(5) Discusses lesson material with other students: seeks verification or offers help.

(11) Total number of occurrences of learning behaviours 3-10, described, plus (13), (14), and (15).

(3) Voluntarily repeats to self sounds, words, etc. in French used by teacher, other students.

Of these, one should note that only (5), "Discusses lesson", significantly correlates with the initial placement level. One other observable behavior, (8) "Stresses 'getting across the message' when using French; fills in for words he/she doesn't know with gestures, made-up French words, altered English words, etc.", has a significant negative correlation with the placement level and no apparent relationship with the criterion, perhaps reflecting a bias of the placement and post-test in favor of correct French production rather than functional communication. It is also possible that behavior which might in a real-life situation reflect a useful communication strategy is; in the classroom, rather an indication that the student has not adequately mastered the lesson.

Variable (7), "Appears to strees formal accuracy; stops to think or asks help mid-sentence in a response before proceeding" was conceived to complement variable (8). It was hypothesized that self-monitoring and attention to accuracy are essential to eventual mastery of an L2. However, the behavior observed may again in some cases have singled out students who had not adequately learned the required material, rather than those consciously seeking feedback and self-perfection. It may also be more important at later stages of language learning.

Variable (9), Role-plays, correlates at .6 with the criterion. This variable is itself significantly correlated with (3) Voluntarily repeats, (4) Works on corrections, (5) Discusses lesson, (8) Stresses communication, (10) Asks questions, (11) Total learning behaviors, and (12) Different learning behaviors. Thus it is not surprising that in the regression analyses reported in Tables 4 and 5, this was the only behavioral variable which was statistically significant at $p<.05$ due to redundancy.

In the first regression analysis all non-scale variables were allowed to enter freely. The second analysis differed only in that the initial placement level was forced in first to control for pre-training French knowledge. In both analyses, (9) Role-plays makes a sizable and significant contribution. In Analysis 1, Step 1, $R^2 = .361$, $F = 19.780^{**}$, at 1 and 35 df. Three other behavioral variables yield F-ratios significant at $.05<p<.15$: (5) Discusses lesson, (12) Different learning behaviors and (2) When in error keeps trying. At Step 4, the four variables together produce a multiple R of .699, with a significant overall F-ratio. The summary statistics are presented in Tables 4 and 5.

TABLE 4

LEARNING BEHAVIORS, STEPWISE ANALYSIS 1.

SUMMARY TABLE

Step Number	Variable Entered	Multiple R	RSQ	Increase in RSQ	F-to-Remove
1	(9) Role-plays	.601	.361	.361	19.780 **

Regression Equation

$Y' = 52.6131 + 3.9301X_1$

TABLE 5

LEARNING BEHAVIORS, STEPWISE ANALYSIS 2.

SUMMARY TABLE.

Step Number	Variable Entered	Multiple R	RSQ	Increase in RSQ	F-to-Remove (at step 2)
1	Place-ment	.398	.159	.159	4.870 *
2	(9) Role-plays	.664	.441	.283	17.192 **

Regression Equation

$Y' = 47.6611 + 2.8989X_1 + 3.5495X_2$

Analysis 2, the initial placement level yields a multiple R of .398 . (9) Role-plays raises this to .664 in Step 2. At Step 2, R^2 = .441 , F 13.42**, at 2 and 34 df.

Standardized β weights:

β_1 .2889
β_2 .5427

While recognizing that the two variables are not totally independent of each other, their β-weights are useful in that they show that the weight given (9) Role-plays is almost twice that of placement in explaining the criterion.[5] With or without the placement covariate; (9) Role-plays accounts for between 30 and 36 percent of the criterion variance. Taking into account the other variables tending toward an acceptable level of statistical significance, it would appear that realistic, communicative use of the second language, talking about the language (perhaps reflecting both an analytical and interest component), the number of different kinds of learning activities pursued, and an element of persistence are characteristic of those students who most rapidly improve their L_2 fluency in this intensive training situation.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

When interview findings for highly successful students were compared with those for the least successful, they revealed differences between the groups of most and least successful learners in the following areas: the diversity of French practice activities reported per individual, insight into and interest in one's own ways of taking and retaining information, and personal involvement in learning the language. Highly successful learners tended to expose themselves to French and practice it in different ways. They in most cases generally appeared quite insightful about their ways of learning, and without exception had strong and multiple reasons for learning French, which usually involved specific situations in which they wished to use it. On the other hand, the types of learning procedures reported were similar for both groups.

The following discussion reports results from the interviews with eleven most successful students on the two questions most related to individual learning techniques. Both teacher fluency ratings and the criterion test were used to identify this group.

Question: "When you hear new words of phrases in French which you wish to learn, which, if any, of the following techniques do you use?"

The nine techniques suggested are arranged below in order of the frequency of positive responses (indicated between parentheses).

(a) Repeat it aloud or to yourself to help you remember (11),

(b) Vizualize how it would look written down or actually write it down, using either phonetic notation or what you think is French spelling (11),

(c) Try to vizualize situations which it describes or in which it might be used, or act it out-(6),

(d) Think about its grammatical structure and try to relate it to other phrases you know of similar structure (6),

(e) Make up sentences using the new words or expressions (6),

(f) Ask for, look up in a dictionary, or try to think of a translation in English (5),

(g) Think of similar-sounding words, rhymes, etc., with which to associate the new material (5),

(n) Try to explain it to yourself in terms of grammatical rules (4).

Any other techniques of which you are aware?

It is notable that all eleven students said they regularly used graphic support, with four emphasizing that they actually wrote down the new material whenever possible. The course methodology seeks to make beginning students independent of reading and writing, but this is conceivably and impossibility for literate adults who have spent from 12 to 20 years in school learning largely through this medium. All eleven interviewees also reported regularly repeating aloud or to themselves language segments they wished to remember. This technique was part of the course methodology, and apparently proved so effective that students adopted it for out-of-class practice as well. Several said that when listening to radio of television they would repeat aloud, while in social situations they did it internally.

The visualizing of related situations appeared to be a fairly common technique. Visual illustrations accompanied most oral material presented in the course, and were also employed to evoke student recall of particular segments. However, several students noted that the illustrations were sometimes misleading, and were not absolutely essential because one could visualize better for oneself (presumably making associations more closely matching one's own cognitive structure).

Over half the students reported that they consciously tried to think about grammatical structure, and the similarities in structure between different phrases. Of the two multilinguals among those interviewed, both reported making associations with structures and vocabulary in their other languages when the structures were similar to those being learned, and agreed that multilingualism had given them a greater awareness of grammatical structure than they otherwise might have had.

Making up sentences using the new material was a frequent technique for five students and an occasional one for another. The regular use of translation was reported by five students, and several more indicated that they translated as a last resort.

According to these students, conscious association-making with similar-sounding words, rhymes, etc., and trying to work out grammatical rules applying to new material were the least used techniques, but they were important for some students and in some situations. Such sound associations were apparently used when the new material was easily rhymable or sounded very much like a known word. Several students mentioned that they tried not to think in terms of grammatical rules, but one who professed frequent use of this technique said "my past French-learning experience has affected my whole approach to language-learning." This one also said he missed vocabulary lists and translation exercises, and sometimes did them on his own.

When asked what else they did, specifically, to learn in such situations, several students mentioned associating new materials with words of similar or related meaning in French. Two said that they tried to analyze the new material into words, and figure out their individual meanings. One student mentioned paying careful attention to pronunciation of the material being learned.

From the above it would appear that rehearsal, many types of association-making, and practice (retrieval) are important techniques for learning new language material.

Question: "Can you think of any other things you do, in or out of class, to learn French?"

Five students said that they consciously sought practice opportunities out of class such as looking for French-speaking companions, going to Arts Center productions in French, or subscribing to and reading French-language newspapers and magazines. All eleven students in another context said that they had more out-of-class contact with French than before

course -- an estimated average of 2½ hours per week "receptive" use (listening or reading) and one-half hour "productive" use (conversational). Nine regularly watched French language television, eight read French newspapers and magazines, six listened to French-language radio programs (a favorite time being in the car to and from work or class), six reported regular conversations in French with both English and French speakers, including spouses and children, classmates, and colleagues also learning French, and with French colleagues at their jobs. Some of the more original practice situations included reading the French explanations on cereal and other packaged food boxes, and eavesdropping on French conversations while riding the bus.

Conversing aloud or internally with oneself in French was a technique reported by four students. Several reported that they practiced by "thinking in French" especially when listening to radio or television programs.

Another technique mentioned was taking notes in French in class on teacher explanations and comments. Many of the students knew enough writing from school French study to do it fairly accurately. VTR observation indicated that at least half the students in the sample took notes and used dictionaries in class. One other learning technique mentioned was discussing grammar and usage with others, generally classmates, but also with teachers and spouses. Student discussion of the lesson was also commonly observed via VTR.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

The statistical analyses and interview findings provide evidence that a number of the learning behaviors and activities investigated were indeed related to the improvement of French listening and speaking skills by these adult students in beginning level intensive French training. Voluntary out-of-class exposure to French also characterized the highly successful students.

In the classroom, both the diversity of observed learning activity and the relative amount of such activity characterized the better students. One of the behaviors, role-playing, appeared to be particularly characteristic, suggesting that in the classroom situation where opportunities for real-life language use are minimal, L_2 practice with a meaningful "set" leads to better learning. While it can be argued that the ability to role-play may be a result as well as a facilitator of language learning, this variable did not correlate significantly with placement level at entry. Furthermore, ability streaming based on aptitude scores insured that none of these students had serious language learning problems. Thus the fact that role-playing behavior was observed for some students even upon initial repetition of new dialogue material and not for others can be taken as an indication of different 'sets' rather than of the fact that some students may not have understood the model. Role-playing was also highly correlated with a number of other learning variables, which may explain part of its predictive power in regression analysis.

Repetition of new material was a very important technique both in and outside the classroom, as was discussion about the L_2. A variety of asscciative techniques were reported in learning new material.

The results suggest that the most successful learners, while differing in their particular learning techniques and L_2 practice activities, are those who use their exposure time in the L_2 actively, and seek to extend this out of the classroom; who actively rehearse new material; who exploit its rich associational possibilities both through conscious association-making and meaningful practice in the L_2, and who seek knowledge about the target language.

They are characterized by a high level of personal initiative and sustained effort in the language learning process, which appears to be related to a long-term commitment to mastery of the L_2.

The findings may be interpreted in light of an information processing model. In Carroll's description of this model (Carroll, 1974: 129-130):

> ---"man is viewed as a kind of computer that takes information from the external environment, stores it temporarily in sensory registers, and then in a short-term working memory, interprets it in terms of information drawn from intermediate and from long-term memory, processes it further through selection and rehearsal, and then may store it in long-term memory."

The following discussion outlines an information processing interpretation of the findings of this study. In this model, the central processing element of the brain, or the "executive" monitors and controls other mental processes. It can focus attention in turn on rapidly changing external or internal stimuli, and can quickly retrieve, transform or otherwise manipulate memories. Sensory registers receive impressions in the various modalities, and retain brief afterimages in their "iconic stores". If any given contents of the stores are attended to (perhaps in response to a created expectancy, either internal or from the outside environment), they may pass in the form of an internal representation of image into what is known as short-term memory. Here a maximum of approximately seven chunks of information from either the stores or from other kinds of memory can be retained for a period of seconds. At this point, if the new information is to pass into the more substantial and sustained (minutes or so) storage capacity of intermediate term memory, renearsal, the formation of associations with "templates" already in memory, or some other cognitive operation on the stimulus is needed. Any external reactions of the learner to the stimulus may provoke "feedback" (new stimuli) from the environment at which the executive determines further processing action to be taken. The conscious association-making and renearsal of new material reported and observed with successful learners would facilitate passage to the intermediate-term memory state. It also provides evidence that the initial sensory information was attended to. The final stage in the process of learning new material is its consolidation in long-term memory - which has unlimited capacity and is thought to contain most of what the individual has learned during lifetime. There is evidence that reinforced presentation of a stimulus, and the periodic retrieval of its representation in memory after intervening activity, both aid in consolidating it in permanent storage. Here the various L_2 exposure and practice activities of the successful learners would enhance the degree of information processing. The related templates stored in long-term memory would become better defined, organized, and "cross-filed" and thus more readily available for recall.

The "forgetting" of permanently stored knowledge appears to be essentially a problem of not being able to retrieve information from long-term memory. It has been shown that recall is facilitated by the presence of cues in the recall situation similar to those surrounding the original learning (or later modifications of it). Thus it would seem that in learning new material the contextual cues surrounding the learning should be related as nearly as possible to those in which later recall will be needed. The ultimate goal of L_2 learning is not the orchestrated regurgitation of memorized strings of words when a particular visual illustration is shown, question asked or model given, but rather is a meaningful communication appropriate to a given real-life situation. The apparent importance to classroom language learning success of a "communicative set" (role-playing) may be explained as a way of insuring the kinds of association-making which would lead to proper "filing" and "cross-filing" of material in long-term memory, so that it would be accessible when needed.

While the findings of this study suggest the appropriateness of an information-

ocessing model for language learning, satisfactory explanation of the language acquisition process in all its aspects remains far beyond the reach of present theory or research. More than anything, the work done so far in second language acquisition, including the observable and conscious aspects of learner input studied here, gives an indication of the complexity of the process, and the many kinds of factors which bear upon it. Behavioral observation in the classroom and elicitation techniques with L_2 students can make an important contribution to our understanding of this process.

NOTES

1. Since it is through formal instruction that most adolescents and adults learn a second language, it is important that our theoretical model of the L_2 learning process encompass classroom as well as natural language learning. This includes specific attention to learner input into the language learning process in such a situation.

2. The grid was based on learning techniques and processes described in the literature, live classroom observation, review and discussion with language educators and students, and pilot testing with VTR classroom films. Ten types of student questions formed part of the original grid, but had to be dropped due to their infrequency during the VTR sequences.

3. See H.S. Conrad, "The personal Equation in Ratings: II . A Systematic Evaluation, " Journal of Educational Psychology, XXXIV (1933), pp. 39-46.

4. The method used, Dialogue-Canada, is an audio-visual course developed by the Public Service Commission of Canada for its training programs. Similar in approach and format to Voix et Images de France, it is organized around French language structures, using dialogues, situations and vocabulary appropriate for the Canadian Public Service. It emphasizes listening comprehension and speaking skills, and particularly at the beginning stages discourages the use of written materials or grammatical explanation. Structure drills are used extensively.

5. Since regression analysis capitalizes to a certain extent on chance, treating the zero order correlations as though they were error-free, the use of a predictor equation such as those generated in this study with a different sample will almost always produce a smaller multiple R. This "shrinkage" can be estimated for multiple regression using a formula which takes into account the ratio of the number of independent variables to the sample size. (See Fred. N. Kerlinger and Elazar J. Pedhazur, Multiple Regression in Behavioural Research, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp. 282-3).

REFERENCES

1. Bailey, N.' Madden, C., & Krashen, S. Is there a 'natural sequence' in second language learning? Language Learning,1974, 24, 235-243.

2. Carroll, J.B. Learning theory for the classroom teacher, in Jarvis, G., ed. The Challenge of Communication. Skokie, Ill: National Textbook,1974, 113-149.

3. Corder, S.P. The study of interlanguage. Paper delivered at the IV AILA Congress, Stuttgart, 1975.

4. Ervin-Tripp, S.M. Is second language learning like the first? TESOL Quarterly, 1974, 8, 111-127.

5. Hosenfeld, C. The new student role: individual differences and implications for instruction, in Jarvis, G., ed. Perspective: a new Freedom. Skokie, Ill., National Textbook, 1975, 113-149.

6. LeFrançois, J. and Sibiga, T. " Vers une Nouvelle Orientation Pedagogique. " Ottawa: Public Service Commission of Canada, Staff Development Branch, Orientation Service, 1972.

7. Naiman, N., Frochlich, M., & Todesco, A. The good language learner. TESL Talk, 1975, 6, 58-76.

8. Richards, J. C. (ed.) Error analysis: perspectives on second language acquisition. London: Longmans, 1974.

9. Rubin, J. What the 'good language learner' can teach us. TESOL Quarterly, 1975, 9, 41-51.

10. Selinker, L. Interlanguage. IRAL, 1972, 10, 209-33.

11. Stern, H.H. Perspectives on second language teaching. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1970.

12. Wesche, M.B. The good adult language learner; a study of learning strategies and personality factors in an intensive course. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. University of Toronto, 1975.

APPENDIX 1

Learning Behaviour Descriptions

A. VTR observer ratings on the following items from the learning behaviours schedule were used as variables in the statistical analyses:

Scale ratings:

1. Attentive to lesson activity; shows involvement. Attentive to responses of other students.	~~1 2 3 4 5~~	Not attentive to lesson activity. Does not show involvement except when called upon to respond.
2. When in error keeps trying until correct, without teacher pushing..	~~1 2 3 4 5~~	When in error gives up easily unless forced by teacher to keep trying.

Numerical ratings:

3. Voluntarily repeats to self sounds, words, etc. in French used by teacher, other students.

4. When corrected, voluntarily repeats correction and finishes response.

5. Discusses lesson material with other students; seeks verification or offers help.

6. Asks questions and makes comments in French in class; avoids English.

7. Appears to stress formal accuracy; stops to think or ask for help mid-sentence in a response before proceeding.

8. Stresses "getting across the message" when using French. Fills in for words he/she doesn't know with gestures, made-up French words, altered English words, etc.

9. "Role-plays" when using French. Takes part of character being played (including self), with speech characterized by prosodic expressions of feeling appropriate to the context and by accompanying gestures and facial expressions.

10. Asks questions on lesson material, other French encountered.

11. Total number of occurences of learning behaviours 3-10, described, plus (13), (14), and (15).

12. Number of different learning behaviours observed (same variables as in 10).

B. The following behaviors were not observed frequently enough to be used as individual variables from the final analyses.

13. Writes notes to self related to lesson materials.

14. Acts out gesturally the meaning of an item in French to show others, demonstrate understanding.

15. Gives related French word or phrase (similar or contrasting) to show understanding of French meaning or structure.

16-20. Specific kinds of questions asked.

Appendix 2

CRITERION MEASURES

1. Test de classement en français, formes A and B / Public Service Commission of Canada.

The two parallel versions of this standardized test of French proficiency consist of four subtests: (1) Compréhension Auditive, (2) Expression Orale, (3) Compréhension de l'Ecrit, and (4) Expression Ecrite. The first three tests are administered to students entering the Public Service Commission's intensive French training program, and a weighted combined score of the listening comprehension and oral expression subtests is used to place students at one of seven proficiency levels, ranging from absolute beginners to fluent speakers of French.

The development and standardization of this test specifically for the adult, civil service population entering the intensive French training program made it ideal for the present study. Since most of the "beginning" students in the study had had some school French, the placement level calculated from Forme A results (listening and speaking) was used as a covariate in one of the analyses reported.

The listening comprehension and oral expression subtests of the parallel Forme B, administered to the students in the research classes during the ninth week or after 200 hours of intensive training, provided the criterion measure for the statistical analyses.

A short description of the two subtests follows.

Compréhension Auditive: This test consists of two parts. In the first there are 20 items in which the student sees a picture and hears four sentences describing it, from which he or she must choose the appropriate response. The second part is similar except that the student hears a sentence or dialogue, then reads the alternative descriptions in simple French in the test booklet. It measures the ability to understand spoken French and the capacity to relate it to a written statement.

Expression Orale: In the first part of this test the student is shown pictures suggesting a story, which he or she then tells in French. The responses are tape-recorded for later scoring. The second part consists of an "interview" in which the student hears a series of questions on tape and answers them in French. This test is a measure of a student's self expression ability in spoken French.

The test and subtests were refined and standardized from a preliminary format which was administered to over 700 students at the seven different levels of the Language Bureau's French training program. Individual items were analyzed and all were discarded which did not have a minimum discrimination index of .40 between adjacent levels. The particular weighting of subtests for placement -- the composite score from 60% of the speaking test score and 40% of the listening test score, was established by the Language

Bureau after experimentation and consultation with the pedagogical counsellors and program specialists employed in the various schools of the training program. Forme B was standardized in a similar manner and its parallelism to A established.

2. Teacher Fluency Ratings

The two teachers for each class provided independent ratings on the "real-life" communicative ability of their students at the end of the ninth week of training, relative to the general student population at this stage of training. These ratings were pooled and the resulting score correlated with the standardized test score at .68. Because of the high correlation, the ratings were not used as a criterion in the regression analyses. However, they were used as a second criterion to identify the group of most successful learners for whom interview findings were summarized.

The teacher rating form had the following wording:

"Pourriez-vous évaluer l'expression orale de vos étudiants (n.b. je ne parle pas ici de l'habilité à imiter mais bien à s'exprimer dans une situation réelle). Si vous placez plusieurs étudiants dans la même catégorie, pouvez-vous les placer par ordre en commençant par les plus forts."

Excellent Bon Moyen Faible Très faible